



N.C. Division of Services for the Blind

A Division of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services

Employee Handbook

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www.ncdhhs.gov/dsb/

Our mission is to enable people who are blind and visually impaired to reach their goals of independence and employment.

Value Statement

1. North Carolina Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) values individuals who are blind or visually impaired; they are our reason for existence. Therefore, we will:

Treat each individual with respect, dignity, equality, and trust.
Support each individual's right to reach his/her maximum potential.
Provide services of the highest quality to individuals.
Advocate for individuals and involve them in advocacy activities.

2. We value all staff as our greatest resource. Therefore, we will:

Treat all staff with respect, dignity, equality, and trust.
Make every effort to provide staff with the necessary resources to do their jobs, including a safe environment and supportive work atmosphere.
Provide staff with the opportunity to have input into the decision-making process and to exercise individual responsibility and professional autonomy.
Recognize and appreciate diversity.
Provide incentives to promote employee satisfaction, recognition, and employment longevity.
Provide opportunities for leadership development.

3. We value resources adequate to meet the needs of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Therefore, we will:

Promote accountability to maximize benefits for individuals.
Advocate to maintain a university training program for professionals in the area of visual impairment.
Seek new funding sources.

4. We value effective leadership. Therefore, we will:

Be responsible to the needs and the concerns of individuals and staff.
Promote open, clear, and honest communication throughout the agency.
Encourage creativity and flexibility at all levels of the agency.
Promote public awareness of people who are blind or visually impaired and provide DSB services to meet their needs and enhance their abilities.
Develop and disseminate policies that are clear, fair, and consistently applied.
Advocate for appropriate technology that will enable agency-wide communication.



Eddie Weaver, Director

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the N.C. Division of Services for the Blind (DSB). I have been a part of this wonderful agency since 1984 and have worked in several positions over the years. I hope you will find your career with DSB as rewarding and enjoyable as I have.

Our agency has a long history of providing specialized services to our consumers, and we are committed to leading the nation in the provision of services that assist the blind and visually impaired with their goals of remaining independent and employed. Every person's role at DSB is valuable and vital to the overall success of our consumers. Every consumer has their own individual goal, and every staff member will have a part in assisting the consumer in accomplishing their goal. Each person is part of the larger team that helps make our consumers and our agency successful. My hope is that you will find your work with DSB challenging, rewarding, and enjoyable, and that together we will find additional ways to serve the growing number of people in our state with vision loss.

This Employee Handbook contains a wealth of information that will be an invaluable resource for you in carrying out your duties as an employee with this agency. I encourage you to become familiar with the staff and with this material to help you perform your employment duties. I hope you will ask any staff member any questions you may have to help you learn about the many programs and services available to the N.C. consumers who are blind or visually impaired.

I welcome you again, and I look forward to working with you in the coming years. Please stop by the Fisher building whenever you can.



Mary Flanagan, Assistant Director

As assistant director I work closely with our program chiefs, **Cynthia Speight, Joann Wood, Lin Taliaferro**, and **Clay Pope**. Each of the program chiefs have program areas they manage but we work together to assure that our programs and services are meeting the needs of individuals who are blind or visually impaired and that we are staying focused on our mission and operate within state and federal regulations.

In my position, I also work as a liaison for our agency to the Department of Health and Human Services in such ways as coordination of departmental policies, disaster preparedness planning, and working with the DHHS legislative representative to track any legislation that might impact our agency or the individuals we serve.

I also work with all our staff in coordinating our outreach efforts to assure we are reaching diverse populations across the state. So you may find me working at the DSB booth at the N.C. State Fair, a health fair, or in our Rehabilitation Center for the Blind video. You will be able to recognize me, as I am usually accompanied by my guide dog.

Our administrative office is located in the Fisher Building on the Governor Morehead School campus, so please come to visit when you are in the area.



Margaret Reader, Human Resources Director

The Division of Services for the Blind Human Resources office provides a full range of personnel services to employees throughout the Division. As the Human Resources Manager, I serve as an advisor and consultant to the DSB Leadership Team. My responsibility is to keep management abreast of agency changes (both program and administrative) that may affect organizational design, employee performance/morale or salaries. Plus, I handle employee relations issues that arise, making sure that management and employees understand the guidelines regarding grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures.

I am also responsible for overseeing the processing of all personnel related actions and making sure that payroll deadlines are met. The State of North Carolina is an equal opportunity employer; therefore I ensure DSB operates a fair and equitable recruitment and employment process.

In addition to the above responsibilities, I make certain that the interpretation and application of relevant State, Federal and local policies, laws and procedures are applied to all DSB employees.



Veronica Wall, Benefits Specialist

Insurance

Retirement Plans

Longevity Administration

New Employee Orientation



Cynthia Speight

Chief, Vocational Rehabilitation Programs and Facilities

The members of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Programs and Facilities staff look forward to sharing information with you about services that help individuals with disabilities prepare for and achieve more independence and employment.

I invite you to talk with **(VACANT)**, rehabilitation program specialist for our Independent Living Rehabilitation Program, and to visit a mini center. Often these services allow individuals to remain in their homes.

Please contact **Deidre Dockery**, VR program coordinator for deaf-blind services, for information about services for individuals and their families who are both visually impaired and hearing impaired.

I also invite you to explore the services offered by our Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (RBC) and the Evaluation Unit (EU). The RBC and EU are comprehensive residential VR programs with a full range of vocational assessments and training. **Marie Piquion-Leach**, our rehabilitation center and evaluation unit director, and her staff will welcome the opportunity to discuss these programs with you.

Please consult with **Patricia Sikes**, our low vision program specialist, who works with staff and individuals to educate them on vision related topics and low vision.

Speak with **Kathy Harrison**, VR specialist for VR in-service training and VR policy development. She has a wealth of information related to training and VR services.

Welcome to the Division of Services for the Blind! We look forward to hearing from you.



Deidre Dockery, Vocational Rehabilitation Program Coordinator

Deaf-Blind State Coordinator

Americans with Disabilities (ADA)

Outreach Coordinator



Kathy Harrison, Vocational Rehabilitation Program Specialist

Policy and Procedures

Rehabilitation In-Service Training

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD)

Teacher Certification



Patricia Sikes, Low Vision Program Specialist

Low Vision Assessments

Contractual Low Vision Optometrists

Low Vision for New Employees and Specialized Groups Training

Vacant

Vacant, Vocational Rehabilitation Program Specialist

Independent Living Rehabilitation Programs

Independent Living Rehabilitation Policy and Procedures

State Independent Living Council Liaison

Independent Living Rehabilitation Quality and Assurance



**Marie Piquion-Leach, Director,
Rehabilitation Center**

Rehabilitation Center for the Blind

Evaluation Unit



JoAnn Wood

Chief, Vocational Rehabilitation Field Services

N.C. Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program has a strong team to plan and coordinate individualized services for people who are blind or have visual impairments to achieve their successful employment goal. Our VR field services team is excited about these programs, and we look forward to talking with you about them.

To find out more about DSB's job placement initiative, contact **Craig Respass**, VR program specialist for job placement services. He also maintains records of our accomplishments and monitors our Social Security Reimbursement Program.

DSB VR program specialist, **David Arthur** is your source of information about supported employment services and transition services for youth. As DSB's liaison with the State Rehabilitation Council, he authors the annual report and coordinates the development of DSB's yearly state plan.

DSB's VR engineer, **Greg Brynildsen**, leads assistive technology services provided in the district offices. He is your information resource for job analysis, job modifications, hardware and software solutions for training and independent living challenges, and small home modification independent living rehabilitation projects.

The four area VR supervisors, **Jan Britton, Sheryl Dotson, Preston Jones, and Becky Powell**, can provide you more information about these services in your area.

We are so glad you have chosen employment with the DSB, and we all stand ready to assist you in any way we can.



David Arthur, Vocational Rehabilitation Program Specialist

Supported Employment

Transition

State Plan

Annual Report



Greg Brynildsen, Rehabilitation Engineer

Statewide Resource, Assistive Technology Consultant and Instructors

Assistive Technology Consultation, Employers and Eligible Individuals

Job Site Assessments and Modifications

Home Assessments and Modifications



Craig Respass, Vocational Rehabilitation Program Specialist

Business Relationships

Job Placement Activities

Social Security Reimbursement

RSA Standards and Indicators



Lin Taliaferro

Chief, Independent Living and Medical Eye Care

Welcome to the Independent Living Services (ILS) Program and Medical Eye Care (MEC) Program. Our services assist individuals who are blind and visually impaired to develop basic adjustment to blindness skills to live independently in their homes and participate in their communities.

Contact our area social services supervisors **Lena Duncan**, **Rick Campbell**, **Luanne Black**, and **Jamie Perkins** for further information about services provided by the social workers for the blind. They monitor case service files, provide training for new workers, monitor ILS expenditures, and work closely with local departments of social services. Social workers for the blind provide services to develop independence in daily living skills, and obtain the assistance needed for individuals to become or remain self-sufficient.

The Communications Unit, Aids and Appliances Unit, Registry of the Blind, and Orientation and Mobility services are provided by field staff for those individuals requesting these services.

The MEC program seeks to prevent blindness, and where possible, to restore vision in individuals who have suffered loss of sight. Our nursing eye care consultants provide education and training on causes of vision loss, and are located in the district offices.

Welcome to the Division of Services for the Blind. Please call if we can assist in anyway.



Clay Pope **Chief, Business Enterprises**

As the chief of the Business Enterprises Program (BEP), I would like to welcome you to the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB). I look forward to meeting you and helping you to assist those individuals interested in becoming a BEP operator managing a food service or vending facility.

To be eligible the individual must be legally blind; all other program eligibility requirements are listed in the Vocational Rehabilitation Policy and Procedures Manual on the DSB Website. If you have questions related to the training curriculum or the scheduling of training classes, please contact **Richard Sladich**, BEP trainer. You may also contact Mr. Sladich to schedule a brief tour of our training facility located in the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind.

Rick Tate is the deputy chief of the BEP and he is responsible for supervising the warehouse manager, **Anthony Mills**, and carpenter staff **Jay Beasley Jr.** and **(VACANT)**.

Should you have any general questions related to the program you may contact the BEP representative in your district office. In the Raleigh District Office contact **Karla Ishak** or **George McAlpine**; in Greenville contact **James Harris**; **Voncile Moser** is in Winston-Salem; **Steven Noble** is in Charlotte; and **Deb Colagerakis-Nelon** is in Asheville.

Victor Correro is the contract-vending officer and works with vending accounts that are too low in volume to support an operator yet collectively help provide additional income for program and agency needs. **Elaine Hamm** is the BEP administrative assistant who assists with contract vending accounts.

Again I would like to welcome you to the DSB and I look forward to hearing from you soon.



Rick Tate, Deputy Chief, Business Enterprise Program

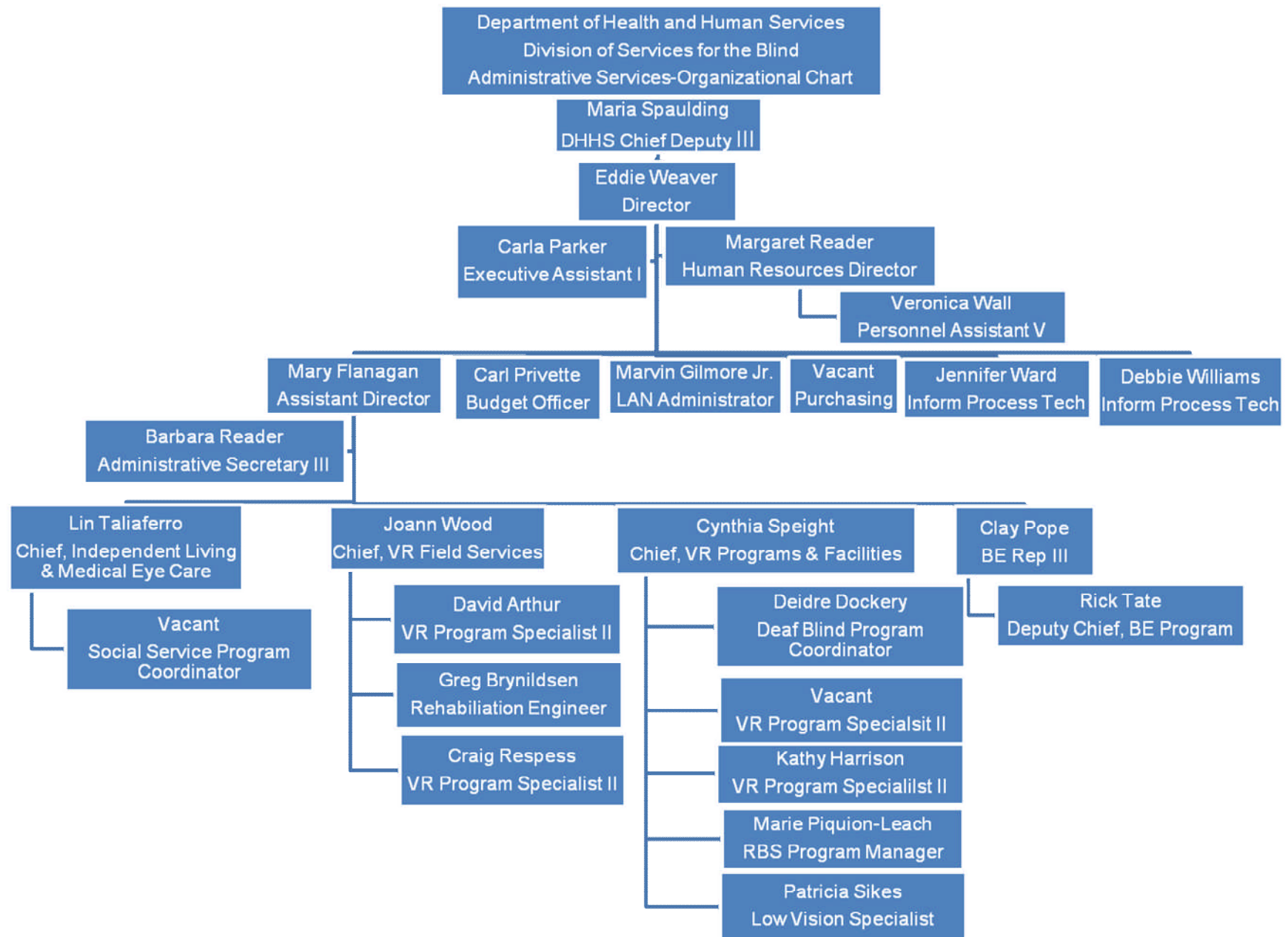
Warehouse Staff

Highway Vending Program Liaison, DOT for Rest-Areas in North Carolina

Purchasing Agent, Food Service Equipment

Set-Up and Deliver Equipment Staff

New and Renovated Food Service Facilities



Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR)

N.C. Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program provides services that enable an individual who is blind or has a visual impairment to become able to work and to obtain, maintain, or regain employment. An individual is referred to the VR counselor as the case manager for these services. Individuals can refer themselves, or they can be referred from other sources, such as DSB staff, school teachers, friends, family, medical providers, or other agencies.

After a thorough assessment, the VR counselor and the eligible individual develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) that identifies the individual's job goal and all services required for the individual to find, keep or return to work. Services are planned according to each eligible individual's employment needs. These may include services such as:

assistive technology training and
equipment purchase
direct job placement
guidance and counseling about self
advocacy and other issues
independent living training
job modification
job retention counseling-others as
required by the individual to be
successful on the specific a job

job seeking skills training
medical services
on-the-job training
required vocational or academic
training tuition, fees, books and
maintenance
supported employment
vocational counseling
work adjustment job coaching

Some services are provided based on economic need, while others are provided regardless of income.

The VR counselor coordinates the delivery of the services through DSB staff that may include:

assistive technology engineer,
consultants, and instructors
business representatives
independent living rehabilitation counselors
low vision specialist

nurse eye care consultants
orientation/mobility specialists
rehabilitation center for the blind staff
social workers for the blind

Medical providers, educational facilities, community rehabilitation programs, private vendors, and other agencies are also used to obtain the required services.

After provision of services as planned on the IPE and the individuals are successfully working in the area of their vocational goal, the VR counselor follows the individual's employment for at least three months, and then closes the case successfully working.

VR Service:

Employment

Every Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) vocational rehabilitation (VR) service is centered on one goal – successful employment of the eligible individual. All VR counselors, business representatives, and community employment specialists conduct ongoing interviews with businesses throughout their area to develop relationships with them and to learn about their employment needs. District offices share information about businesses, and a DSB VR placement data base is published monthly to share business contacts statewide. When eligible individuals are ready for employment, DSB staff matches their skills, abilities, and experiences to the needs of businesses in their area. Businesses are provided information about all resources that could apply, such as DSB on-the-job training funds, unpaid work experience for the individual to gain exposure to the job setting, assistive technology job analysis and modification, and tax credit programs. After the individual goes to work, the VR counselor closely monitors the employment until it is stable, which is at least three months, and stands ready to step in should any difficulties or challenges appear.

VR Service:

Rehabilitation Center for the Blind

The N.C. Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (RBC) is a residential program, which provides comprehensive training to develop personal and vocational skills to live and work independently. The RBC is comprised of three buildings, the main facility where most classrooms and offices are located, as well as two dormitories. The RBC is located on the Governor Morehead School Campus in Raleigh, N.C., which is on the same campus as the N.C. Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) State Office.

The comprehensive Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services require an interdisciplinary approach to best serve eligible consumers. Our programs vary from independent living and prevocational skills training to specialized vocational training services.

Primary consideration is given to VR eligible individuals who are newly blinded and pursuing vocational goals, those requiring special training to attend post-secondary education, and those requiring rehabilitation independent living skills to maintain personal independence. Most of the training areas are available 12 months out of the year, whereas others are offered as needed or when special populations are being served.

The RBC also offers transition services to high school students and new graduates who are 15 years of age and older. Four summer programs offer training in various areas including work experience, independent living skills training, technology/computer training, and college preparation.

Other services offered at the RBC include: recreation, medical, psychological, counseling, deaf-blind services, and food and residential services. The RBC also conducts assessments in the following areas: technology, low vision and comprehensive vocational assessment.

The professionals at the RBC use a team approach to ensure the success of the individuals they serve. An important member of this team is not only the consumer but the home counselor, who is involved and informed throughout the training process.

All referral guidelines are outlined in the DSB VR Program Policy and Procedures Manual under the heading RBC. If you have questions call, (919) 733-5897 or toll free 1-800-846-5860. The address is: N.C. Rehabilitation Center for the Blind, 305 Ashe Ave., Raleigh, NC 27601.

The N.C. Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) Evaluation Unit (EU) is dedicated to providing the best vocational services to assist vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors and their eligible consumers in planning VR services that will result in employment. The EU's goal is to provide information which will assist VR counselors in matching employment to the individual's abilities and interests.

This service is provided through the referral process and is available to anyone determined eligible for VR services and who has an employment goal. The EU is located at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (RBC) in Raleigh on the Governor Morehead School Campus where housing and meals will be provided. The EU's various assessment services may require a stay of five days or a special request may require only one day.

The evaluation unit team consists of the following professionals: VR counselor, vocational evaluator, psychologist, low vision program specialist, contractual low vision optometrists, rehabilitation aide, administrative secretary, nurse and teachers at the RBC. The VR counselor guides the individual through the process and assures all assessment needs are met. The vocational evaluator assists in identifying skills, engages in hands-on work activities, determines vocational preferences and develops a list of job matches tailored to the individual. Psychological services include the assessment of the individual's basic academic skills, personality and vocational interests. Low vision services include assessments which enable individuals to learn about their vision and how to use it more effectively. Assessments from RBC teachers may include orientation and mobility, technology, communications skills and/or independent living skills.

Referrals to this service may be made by scheduling and sending a referral packet to the EU then an entrance date will be scheduled for the individual. The referral information needed is outlined in the VR Policy and Procedures Manual (on-line) under RBC, referral guidelines for all programs. It is important to review the information in the VR Policy Procedures Manual under the heading EU in order to become familiar with more specific information. The EU works with the home VR counselor, to meet the Individual's assessment needs for program entry into the Business Enterprise Program, secondary education sponsorship, RBC's adult program, transition, supported employment, and on-the-job training. Specific requests should be indicated in the cover letter to best assist the vocational evaluator and the individual being served.

The EU is here to serve by identifying vocational strengths and any barriers which may interfere with reaching an employment goal.

VR Service:***Supported Employment***

Supported employment is a service to assist individuals with the most significant disabilities to be successful on a job. N.C. Division of Services for the Blind works with supported employment vendors, usually a community rehabilitation facility or other specialized vendor, to provide these services.

After a comprehensive assessment, the vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor will refer to the vendor who provides services in the area in which the individual lives. The vendor has a job coach who provides job placement, on-the-job coaching to assist the individual in learning the job tasks and on-going support to ensure the individual will be successful on-the-job. After the VR case is closed, funds are available for the vendor to continue follow-up with the individual (called long-term support).

VR Service:***Transition***

N.C. Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) provides specialized services for eligible high school students beginning as early as age 14. The goal of these services is to have the students well-prepared to enter the world of work or to enter post-secondary training that will lead to successful employment immediately when they receive their high school diploma. Services continue until the individual is successfully employed. Individualized services may include vocational evaluation and exploration, work experiences, technology assessments and training, summer programs at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind, financial aid for training assistance, and other services. DSB has cooperative agreements with some school systems where a vocational rehabilitation transition counselor works with students in the schools. These include Charlotte/Mecklenburg Schools, Cumberland County, Durham County, and Wake County schools, and the joint programs for Guilford County and Winston-Salem/Forsyth County schools, and New Hanover, Pender, Onslow and Brunswick schools. A specialized program serves the students while attending the Governor Morehead School for the Blind. The specialized programs provide additional services of student job exploration groups, job coaching for work experiences, and other more intensive services.

Independent Living Rehabilitation Program (ILR)

Independent Living Rehabilitation Programs (ILR)

The purpose of the Independent Living Rehabilitation (ILR) Program is to provide services and supports to help maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence and productivity of individuals with significant disabilities and to promote the integration and full inclusion of individuals with significant disabilities into the mainstream of American society. The ILR program is statewide, serving all 100 counties in North Carolina. ILR counselors are the case managers for individuals receiving services in this program. The 16 ILR counselors work out of our seven district offices. The specialized and individualized services of the ILR program can be provided in-home and in small community-based classes called mini centers and program available at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. The ILR Program consists of two service areas: state independent living (IL) services and independent living services for older individuals who are blind.

State Independent Living Services

Eligibility: Individuals with a severe visual impairment whose ability to function independently in the family or community or whose ability to obtain, maintain or advance in employment is substantially limited and for whom the delivery of Independent Living services will improve the ability to function, continue functioning, or move toward functioning independently in the family or community or employment.

Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind

Eligibility: Individuals age 55 or older whose severe visual impairment makes competitive employment extremely difficult to obtain but for whom IL goals are feasible.

Services: Include but are not limited to

- information and referral services
- diagnostic and assessment services
- adjustment to vision loss counseling
- extensive IL skills training: extensive skills training, which is defined as detailed instruction provided over an extended period of time such as kitchen safety and meal preparation as opposed to basic skills training that can be completed with minimal instruction such as pouring or marking appliances.
- advocacy

Referrals: Referrals are accepted from all Division of Services for the Blind programs. Please send written referrals to the proper ILR counselor that includes the individual's name, address and contact information along with copies of the eye exam report, individual's assessment/plan of services from the referring program and any other data relevant to the individual's ILR service needs.

Collaboration: The ILR program also utilizes the expertise of social workers for the blind, orientation & mobility specialists, nursing eye care consultants, deaf-blind specialists, assistive technology specialists/instructors and vocational rehabilitation counselors to provide a variety of services that empower individuals to reach their ILR goals.

Business Enterprises Program

The Business Enterprise program (BEP) is a program of the N.C. Division of Services for the Blind (DSB), created in 1935 by the N.C. General Assembly. The program's purpose is to provide employment opportunities to the legally blind citizens of North Carolina through the operation of vending and on-site food service locations on state property throughout the state. On a national level, the program is known as the Randolph-Sheppard program. The federal **Randolph-Sheppard Act** grants the State Licensing Agency, such as this agency, the rights to operate food service and vending facilities on federal properties.

Currently there are 83 BEP facilities located in North Carolina with annual gross sales of \$11.4 million for calendar year 2008. Our facilities are located on federal, state, county and private property. The agency is responsible for locating and establishing feasible facility locations and for providing necessary equipment, initial stock and petty cash to operate these retail facilities. The legally blind individuals trained and licensed by the DSB are competitively awarded these locations where they function largely as independent contractors and business people. The proceeds generated by the facility accrue to the operator minus a small portion, referred to as set-aside that is retained by the agency and is similar in nature to a franchise fee. This assessment is used for the purpose of offsetting program expenses so that on-going assistance and training may be provided the operator.

Once awarded a facility, the operator is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the facility. The agency continues to provide counseling and management services as needed to insure that the facility is managed professionally and that it is also as profitable for the operator as it can be. The operators must sign a contract with the agency, which outlines the requirements and standards the operator is expected to meet or exceed.

Independent Living Services Program (ILS)

The goal of the program is to provide opportunities and resources which enable blind and visually impaired individuals to develop daily living skills to achieve their maximum level of independence. Services are offered by social workers for the blind to individuals of all ages in all 100 counties in North Carolina.

The following services are offered at no cost and eligibility is based on vision and need for the services:

- adjustment services for the blind and visually impaired
- health support services
- individual and family adjustment services
- information and referral.

The following service is based on income eligibility and need for the service:

Level I-In Home Management

Individuals in this program can:

- (1) be legally blind with a visual acuity of 20/200 or less, best corrected, or a field of vision in the better eye to such a degree an angle is no greater than 20 degrees;
- (2) have a visual impairment with a visual acuity of 20/100 or less with best correction with a progressive eye disease or a 30 degree field of limitation or,
- (3) have best corrected central vision acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye; or
- (4) one or both of the following conditions:
 - (a) presence of a chronic, progressive eye pathology; and/or
 - (b) visual acuity better than 20/70 without a progressive eye pathology but results in a functional handicap. A functional handicap is defined as a physical or mental condition that impairs, interferes or impedes with an individual's ability to perform one or more activities of daily living such as self-care, homemaking skills, communication skills, and mobility.

An individual can be referred by anyone who can provide a name, telephone number, address, eye report or other identifying information.

This program works in conjunction with other N.C. Division of Services for the Blind programs to enhance services to maximize an individual's independence in the home, school, community and in the work environment.

These services are to enhance the individual's ability to achieve independence and improve activities of daily living.

Referrals to other programs are based on the needs of the individual.

ILS Service:***Aids and Appliances Unit***

The Aids and Appliances Unit is a service the Division of Services for the Blind that offers to sell adaptive aids and appliances to all the blind and visually impaired citizens in North Carolina. The program was established by N.C. General Statute as a nonprofit service, and we are unable to advertise or compete with private vendors.

Aids and appliances stocks popular items such as: talking/Braille/large-print watches; sewing aids, kitchen aids such as crock pots, pressure cookers and frying pans; low vision aids such as special sunglasses and magnifiers.

The general public is able to make direct purchases of adaptive aids from the Aids and Appliances Unit. Individuals are encouraged to contact the unit for the latest prices before ordering.

Items from aids and appliances can be purchased with cash, or by check through the mail. We are unable to accept credit cards, debit cards or sell online. The items are sold at cost and include the N.C. sales tax. There is a small shipping and handling charge for each order.

The Aids and Appliances Unit is housed in Room 110, Haywood Building, 315 Ashe Ave. on the Governor Morehead School Campus, Raleigh, NC, 27606.

Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The telephone number is (919) 715-0249 or 1-866-222-1546. Spanish speaking individuals are also able to contact the unit by contacting the CARELINE at 1-800-662-7030 and asking to be connected to the Aids and Appliances Unit.

ILS Service:***Communication Unit***

The Communications Unit produces materials in alternate format – primarily Braille – for agency employees, and for material necessary for Division of Services for the Blind eligible individuals to achieve their independent living and/or employment goals at no cost.

Materials for other agencies, groups and individuals are produced in Braille as time permits for a fee per page. Other alternate formats may be produced if the person in need of the material has no other means of obtaining the material in alternate format.

The Communications Unit will follow copyright laws, specifically Public Law 104-197, which allows the production of material in “specialized formats” (Braille, audio, or digital text which is exclusively for use by blind or other people with disabilities) without obtaining copyright permission. Large print production is not included in Public Law 104-197. The unit is unable to produce textbooks, cookbooks, math, computer codes or foreign language Braille. Individuals will be referred to appropriate resources if the unit is unable to fulfill the requests, and a list of resources can be provided to the individual.

The Communications Unit is located in the Haywood Building, 315 Ashe Ave. on the Governor Morehead School Campus, Raleigh, NC, 27606. The telephone number is 919-715-2436; ask to be connected to the Communications Unit.

ILS Service:

Register for the Blind

Division of Services for the Blind maintains a Register of the Blind that describes the condition and cause of blindness for all people in North Carolina with the following visual acuities (N.C.G.S. 111-4):

1. Visual acuity of 20/70 or worse in the better eye with best correction; or
2. A field of vision in the better eye to such an extent that its widest diameter subtends an angle of not greater than 30 degrees.
3. Visual acuity of 20/50 in the better eye with best correction with one more of the following eye conditions: cataract, nystagmus, diabetic retinopathy, optic atrophy, glaucoma, retinal degeneration, keratoconus, retinitis pigmentosa, macular degeneration.

We may release to the Division of Motor Vehicles, the name, address, and date of birth of people listed on the register that are legally blind, and the information and documents are treated confidentially for their use only and cannot be released by them to any person for commercial or political use.

For further information please contact the Registrar, 309 Ashe Ave., Room 205, Raleigh NC 27699-2601. The phone number is 919-733-9822.

Medical Eye Care Program

The Medical Eye Care (MEC) Program provides services to restore sight and prevent vision loss to individuals with limited income. These services are provided to any eligible resident of North Carolina of all ages in all 100 counties as determined by eligibility criteria of the program. The program identifies three major causes of blindness: retinal disorders, cataracts, and glaucoma. The MEC program uses every available resource to prevent blindness from these and all other causes, and where possible, to restore vision in individuals who have suffered loss of sight.

The MEC offers services to individuals in their home counties. Individuals can apply for the program at their local department of social services (DSS), with the local social worker for the blind where they are located in either the DSS or the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) district office, or other sites in the county. They must meet income guidelines to be eligible for services.

Some of the services provided through the MEC program to eligible individuals are: eye exams, eye treatment and surgery, and eye medications.

Medical eye care services are offered through a staff of nursing eye care consultants who are located in the agency's district offices. They provide vision screenings for preschool and school-age children, low vision evaluations, correction of limited vision with low-vision aids, or corrective lenses, and eye care education.

The MEC program works in conjunction with other programs within the DSB so individuals can be referred to the most appropriate program for services. An example of this is to refer an individual to the agency's Vocational Rehabilitation Program when the individual is seeking employment, or is employed.

For further information, please call the toll free number 1-866-222-1546.

Support Service

Assistive Technology VR, ILR, ILS

Assistive Technology (AT) services are provided to eligible individuals to access, design, and determine hardware and software solutions to assist them with learning, working, communication and access difficulties that lead to more independent and productive lives. Division of Services for the Blind has a rehabilitation engineer, seven AT consultants, and three AT instructors in the field offices to offer a wide variety of services through referral by an individual's vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor, independent living rehabilitation (ILR) counselor, or social worker for the blind (SWB). Currently the rehabilitation engineer and AT consultants work with the VR counselor with AT assessments, recommendations for equipment purchase, delivery and set-up of equipment, training, job analysis, and job modification, as well as trouble-shooting difficulties and research for difficult solutions. They also serve ILR counselors for AT assessments, recommendations for equipment purchase, delivery and set-up of equipment, and minor home modification recommendations and contracting. ILR counselors and SWB can request the assistance of an AT instructor for assistance with training of eligible individuals in the use of AT hardware and software. The AT staff work closely with the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind staff to make services available in all areas of the state.

Support Services:

Deaf-Blind VR, ILR

North Carolina is home to more than 27,000 individuals with hearing and vision loss. As baby boomers age, this number is expected to double. Since 1976, the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) has been providing specialized services to individuals with vision and hearing problems. The term Deaf-Blind (DB) was coined by the federal government and is used to refer to individuals with combined vision and hearing loss. Some individuals may be profoundly deaf and totally blind while others may be hard of hearing with low vision.

To assess and meet the unique needs of individuals who are DB, the agency employs DB specialists who work to assist with helping eligible individuals reach their goals of employment and/or improved independent living skills.

Individuals who are DB have the potential to work and live independently with proper training. DB specialists work on the front line, assisting individuals with psychosocial aspects of living with dual sensory losses. The specialists provide assistance to eligible individuals and their families by conducting assessments at work to address vocational limitations; assessments at home to address communication barriers; guidance and counseling on the dynamics of hearing and vision loss; presenting at trainings and mini centers; applying for comparable benefits; providing training on how to properly use new technology; counseling on the scope and function of hearing aids and assistive listening devices; developing job opportunities; providing sensitivity trainings for employers; advocating for accommodations and transition planning in Individualized Educational Plan meetings; coordinating or facilitating transportation to and from Ears-Nose-Throat diagnostic appointments; and providing access to recreation and advocacy through individual organization activities.

Individuals cannot apply directly to the DB specialists for services. Applicants must enter the service delivery system through the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program or Independent Living Rehabilitation Program. After services have been initiated, referrals may be made to the DB specialist using the DSB referral form. Often VR counselors are unaware of hearing loss during the

initial assessment period and subsequently learn of hearing loss after services are initiated. When this occurs, it is important for VR counselors to document the condition of deaf-blindness by amending the initial intake information so that federal reports generated can document the incidence of deaf-blindness as accurately as possible.

Serving individuals with vision and hearing loss brings with it the support of qualified DB specialists that are specifically trained to serve those with dual sensory losses. Contact your DB specialist for assistance today!

Support Services:

Low Vision VR, ILR, ILS

Low vision services enable individuals to better understand their visual strengths and challenges as well as explore ways to maximize the use of vision via adaptive techniques and/or low vision devices. The Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) provides low vision services to assist individuals with achieving their independent living, educational, and vocational goals. Results from low vision assessments may also yield information highlighting the need for other DSB services such as orientation and mobility, independent living skills training and/or assistive technology (AT). DSB low vision assessments are primarily conducted by nursing eye care consultants, the low vision program specialist and DSB contractual low vision optometrists.

Nursing Eye Care Consultants:

- provide services in the home, work place or other locations in the local community
- work with individuals served by social workers for the blind (SWB), independent living rehabilitation (ILR) counselors and vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors
- receive their referrals directly
- address use of adaptive techniques to best utilize vision, lighting, positioning, nonoptical as well as near and distance optical devices (except for monoculars and prescription devices),

The Low Vision Program Specialist:

- works primarily in the Low Vision Clinic and the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (RBC)
- provides services to individuals attending the Evaluation Unit (EU) and RBC
- works with field-referred people served by ILR counselors and VR counselors
- assesses visual acuity, color and contrast, visual fields, adaptive techniques, lighting, positioning, nonoptical as well as near and distance optical devices (except prescription devices)

Contractual Low Vision Optometrists:

- work in the Low Vision Clinic in Raleigh, available three hours per week
- provide services to individuals served by VR counselors
- primarily serve individuals attending the EU and with others as scheduled by the low vision program specialist
- assess visual acuity, visual fields, impact of eye condition(s) on functioning, refractive errors, and recommend prescription and nonprescription optical devices for near and distance as well as adaptive techniques

All individuals referred for low vision services will first need a current eye health exam and a copy of a current eye report. Any low vision recommendations made after the assessment are sent to the referral source who determines what devices, if any, can be purchased as well as informs the individual of any determinations.

When either the nursing eye care consultant or low vision program specialist determines individuals cannot meet their goals with a combination of adaptive techniques and devices, they may be recommended for a video magnification evaluation. If the VR counselor or SWB approves this evaluation, the evaluation may be provided either by the nursing eye care consultant in district offices or in the RBC AT center by the AT specialist or low vision program specialist.

Support Services:

Orientation and Mobility VR, ILR, ILS

Orientation and mobility (O&M) is a type of training designed to promote safe and independent movement for individuals who are blind and visually impaired in their home, job, school, and community. Services are provided by orientation and mobility specialists to individuals in all 100 counties in North Carolina.

Services might include: evaluation of O&M needs or skills, basic sighted guide, self protective techniques, public transportation use (city buses, taxis, trains), orientation to school campus, routes or job sites, residential or business travel skills, indoor/outdoor cane skills, street crossings, map reading skills, use of landmarks and clues, etc.

Other specialized skills might include: use of a white support cane or long cane, evaluation for dog guide schools, rural travel skills, etc.

All referrals for orientation and mobility services can be accessed through a vocational rehabilitation counselor, independent living rehabilitation counselor or social worker for the blind. Referrals for services are prioritized as follows: employment, college bound/secondary education, independent living skills.

For additional information about DSB services, please call 1-866-222-1546.

Website resources for Vision:

Dictionary of Eye Terminology - Excerpts which includes definitions and pronunciations
<http://www.eyeglossary.net/>

Medical Dictionary

Searchable medical dictionary with very short definitions and pronunciations
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/mplusdictionary.html>

All About Vision

List of vision terms
<http://www.allaboutvision.com/resources/glossary.htm>

OSF Glossary of Vision Terms

Short, easy to understand list of common vision terms
<http://stayinginshape.com/3osfcorp/libv/p22.shtml>

Common Abbreviations and Meanings

<http://www.nova.edu/hpd/otm/otm-a/common.html>

Common Abbreviations Used by Eye Care Specialist

<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=74&DocumentID=3824>

Dangerous Abbreviations

<http://www.nccmerp.org/dangerousAbbrev.html>

Anatomy, Physiology, and Pathology of the Human Eye

Short definitions of both commonly used terms and many less commonly used terms.
http://www.tedmontgomery.com/the_eye/glossary/A.html

Other Agencies Departments and Programs DSB has working relationships:

N.C. Department of Public Instruction

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/organization/>

N.C. Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing:

<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh/>

N.C. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation:

<http://dvr.dhhs.state.nc.us/>

N.C. Client Assistance Program

<http://dvr.dhhs.state.nc.us/DVR/CAP/caphome.htm>

N.C. Assistive Technology Program

<http://www.ncatp.org/index.htm>

N.C. Department of Health and Human Services-Office of Education

<http://www.ncoes.net/>

ACRONYMS

ACB	American Council of the Blind
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AER	Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired
AFB	American Foundation for the Blind
AT	Assistive Technology
BEP	Business Enterprises Program
CAP	Client Assistance Program
CCTV	Closed Circuit TV
CRP	Community Rehabilitation Program
CSAVR	Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DPI	Department of Public Instruction
DSB	Division of Services for the Blind
DSDHH	Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
DSS	Department of Social Services
DVRS	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
ECV	Elected Committee of Vendors
FFY	Federal Fiscal Year – 10/01/yy – 09/30/yy
GMS	Governor Morehead School
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
ILR	Independent Living Rehabilitation
ILS	Independent Living Services
IPE	Individualized Plan for Employment
MEC	Medical Eye Care
NCARRS	N.C. Association of Radio Reading Services
NFB	National Federation of the Blind
NFBNC	National Federation of the Blind of N.C.
NIB	National Industries for the Blind
NCAWB	N.C. Association of Workers for the Blind
NCCB	N.C. Council of the Blind
NCDBA	N.C. Deaf/Blind Associates
NCLBPH	N.C. Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
NCLF	N.C. Lions Foundation
NCSAB	National Council of State Agencies for the Blind
O&M	Orientation and Mobility
RSA	Rehabilitation Services Administration
SFY	State Fiscal Year – 07/01/yy – 06/30/yy
SILC	Statewide Independent Living Council
SLA	State Licensing Agency
SRC	State Rehabilitation Council
SSDI	Social Security Disability Income
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
SWB	Social Worker for the Blind
VI	Visually Impaired
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation
WIA	Workforce Investment Act